

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

RURAL TRANSPORT SURVEYS

Report
of Preliminary Results

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Introduction

1. A Committee to study the problem of rural bus services was set up by the Minister of Transport in 1959 under the Chairmanship of Professor D. T. Jack. The Committee's report was published in March, 1961.¹ They attributed the decline in rural bus services mainly to the growth of private transport, which was expected to continue. Their general conclusion was that the present and probable future levels of rural bus services were not adequate to avoid a degree of hardship and inconvenience sufficient to call for special steps, and they recommended mainly a system of direct financial assistance, in part from local and in part from central sources, and administered through the County Councils.

2. The report on bus services of the Highland Transport Enquiry, published in December, 1961,² and the report on rural transport of the Council for Wales and Monmouthshire, published in September, 1962,³ agreed generally with the Jack Committee's analysis of the degree of hardship and inconvenience, but differed as to the source of a subsidy and the method of its administration.

3. The Minister of Transport announced in August, 1962, that, in order to assist his consideration of this difficult problem, he intended to arrange for detailed studies to be made of passenger transport facilities in a few selected rural areas. The factual studies of the existing situation in the areas chosen have now been completed and are described, with their preliminary results, below.

4. The preliminary results are published in this form in order to make the main results of these factual studies available without awaiting the full statistical analysis, which is planned at a later date.

¹ Ministry of Transport: Rural Bus Services, Report of the Committee, published by H.M.S.O., price 4s. 6d. (4s. 11d.) (Code No. 55-390).

Ministry of Transport: Highland Transport Enquiry, Bus Services in the Highlands and Islands, published by H.M.S.O., price 1s. 3d. (1s. 6d.) (Code No. 55-395).

The Council for Wales and Monmouthshire: Report on the Rural Transport Problem in Wales, published by H.M.S.O., price 3s. 6d. (3s. 10d.) (Cmd. 1821).

The Factual Surveys

5. Detailed surveys of transport availability, travel needs, and actual travelling were carried out in March and April, 1963, in six rural areas, in England, Scotland and Wales, which were selected as typifying some or all of the various aspects of the rural transport problem. The main element of the surveys was a house-to-house interview covering all the inhabitants aged more than 3 years. Through arrangements made by the Social Survey Division of the Central Office of Information, this was conducted on behalf of the Ministry of Transport, by Marplan Ltd., a firm of market research consultants, who also tabulated the results. At the same time, the Ministry obtained information from the British Railways Board and the bus operators about the public passenger services in the areas during the survey period. The Ministry also obtained information from the General Post Office, local authorities, hospital management committees, and voluntary organisations about the routes and timings of mail vans, school buses, ambulances, hospital car services, and voluntary car services. The local authorities in the areas concerned also gave descriptions of the social and economic circumstances of the areas.

The Survey Areas

6. The surveys were carried out in six areas. In all of these there have been population decreases in recent years. The exact boundaries of the areas are given in the Appendix.

(i) *Devon—West of Crediton*

This survey was conducted in two sub-divisions because the population level of the area was higher than in the others, and in order that North Tawton might stand separately as an example of the larger rural community.

(a) *The Parishes of Bow, Clannaborough, Down St. Mary and Zeal Monachorum.*

A population of approximately 1,311 is spread between various small villages and isolated houses. Interviews were completed with 1,150 persons in 398 households.

Agriculture provides the main source of employment. The nearest large towns are Exeter (16 miles) and Crediton (8 miles).

Bow had a daily bus service (except on Wednesdays) to Exeter, and a workers' service to Crediton. There was a daily service with several timings at Morchard Road and Copplestone. Zeal Monachorum had a service on 2 days a week, and Down St. Mary on one day a week.

(b) *North Tawton*

North Tawton is a large village of some 1,023 persons. Interviews were completed with 918 persons in 345 households. It lies 19 miles from Exeter and 7 miles from Okehampton.

A daily bus for workers ran to Okehampton with additional journeys for afternoon shopping on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. A weekday shopping bus ran to Crediton and Exeter, except on Wednesdays.

Both parts of the Devon area were served by local railway stations. No other survey area had direct rail facilities. The stations had a daily service of between 6 and 10 trains on weekdays and 3 on Sundays. Each station had a train service suitable for work-people, but only North Tawton had a late evening return from Exeter.

(ii) *Montgomery—West of Welshpool*

This is a predominantly Welsh-speaking area. There are no villages of appreciable size. About 721 people are distributed among the small settlements and the scattered upland and valley farms. Interviews were completed with 637 persons in 205 households. Most of the inhabitants are employed in agriculture and domestic work. Welshpool is 12 miles away, and Llanfyllin (10 miles) and Oswestry (23 miles) are other market centres.

Only one small part of the area was served by a daily bus, but other bus services operated on market days and Saturdays.

(iii) *Lincolnshire—North of Horncastle*

In this area about 811 people live in a number of villages, the largest of which does not exceed 300 in population. Interviews were completed with 737 persons in 257 households. The area is 7 miles from Louth, and primarily agricultural.

Donington had a daily bus service to Louth and Lincoln. Other villages had bus services on 2 weekdays.

(iv) *Westmorland—North of Kirkby Stephen*

About 913 people in this area are spread among 3 principal villages, several small hamlets, and scattered farmhouses. 825 people in 287 households were interviewed. They find employment in raising sheep and stock on the slopes of the Pennines, and in dairy and sheep farming in the valley of the River Eden. The nearest towns are Appleby (3½ miles) and Kirkby Stephen (8 miles).

Warcop, Sandford and Great Musgrave had a bus service with 4-11 journeys on weekdays and Sundays, whilst the fellside villages of Murton and Hilton had a bus service on Tuesdays and Saturdays only.

(v) *Kirkcudbrightshire—West of Dumfries*

This is an area of mixed rural economy including farming, forestry, and allied trades. About two-thirds of the population of 1,373 live in four villages. Interviews with 1,215 of these in 434 households were completed. The nearest towns are Castle Douglas (6 miles), Dalbeattie (7 miles) and Dumfries (12 miles).

There were various bus facilities in the area. Springholm, Kirkpatrick Durham and Haugh of Urr had a service of six to eleven journeys on Mondays to Fridays, and nine to sixteen journeys on Saturdays. The villages of Corsock and Milton had a bus service only on Saturdays.

(vi) *Barffshire—Tomintoul*

The village of Tomintoul is a tourist and residential holiday centre with a developing winter season. The survey area also includes about one hundred and fifty holdings or farms, with expanding forestry and quarry

works. The survey estimate of the population was 934, of whom about 360 live in Tomintoul itself. Interviews with 798 persons in 270 households were completed.

There was one bus service in the area, running between Tomintoul and Dufftown Station (18 miles), except on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

The House-to-House Surveys

7. The house-to-house interviews in the survey areas were planned to obtain a complete record of all journeys of more than a mile in length made in one week, by all persons over three years of age resident in the area. People were also asked about journeys they would have liked to have made, but which they were prevented from making by lack of transport facilities. Additional information was collected about private vehicle ownership and other factors likely to influence the demand for transport. Altogether over 6,000 people were interviewed and some 39,000 journeys recorded. A summary of the preliminary analysis of the results in each of the areas is given in Tables 1 to 7. The following are the main features displayed by the analysis.

Car Ownership in Rural Areas

8. Well over half the households interviewed had the regular use of some means of private motor transport (Table 1). In all the areas, more than 40 per cent. of households had the use of a private car. (The average for the country as a whole is one-third of all households).

9. Two in every three households contained at least one person holding a valid driving licence (Table 2). Even among households without private transport a quarter of them contained someone with a driving licence. Over a third of the households with private transport included two or more licence-holders.

Numbers of Journeys Made (Table 3)

10. On average each person made about six journeys (reckoning outward and homeward journeys separately) in the survey week. This is a much lower level of travel than is typical in the country as a whole. This result is partly accounted for by the circumstance that residence within a mile of place of work is common in rural areas, where employment is predominantly dependent on the land; this has the effect, for the purposes of the surveys, of reducing the number of journeys to work. It also reflects differences in social habits as well as limitations in the transport facilities available.

11. Full details of journeys made by persons in households with private transport compared with those without are not yet available, but the analysis to date has shown that between a quarter and a third of those with private transport made daily journeys, whilst less than a fifth of those without private transport did so. The surveys indicated that persons in households without their own private transport were able to make frequent use of the private transport of other households. But, as was to be expected, many more journeys were made by people with their own transport than by those without (Table 3). About two-fifths of those without private transport made no journeys at all in the survey week, whereas more than three-quarters of people in households with private transport made at least one journey.

Means of Transport Used (Tables 4 and 5)

12. Only about 10 per cent. of all journeys were made by public transport, while private transport of all kinds, including commercial vehicles, accounted for over 65 per cent. Contract buses accounted for a further 10 per cent. The remainder of journeys were made by bicycle, walking, taxi, hire car and other means.

13. Private cars were used for about 40 per cent. of the total number of journeys during the week, but at week-ends, when families more often go out together, the proportion rose to around 60 per cent. Journeys by private vehicles of all kinds accounted for three-quarters of all travel at week-ends.

14. Reliance on public transport services was generally small. In the Devon area, the only one directly served by rail, train services were used only for 5 per cent. of all journeys. In the Kirkcudbrightshire area, public bus services accounted for 25 per cent., but in no other area did the proportion exceed 12 per cent. of the total.

15. Contract buses, public buses and train were used for about a quarter of all journeys on weekdays, but very much less at week-ends. This difference arises because in many cases contract buses are used to take children to school and people to work. In four out of the six areas, contract bus services played a much larger part than the public bus and train services.

Purpose of Journey (Table 6)

16. The most common reasons for travelling were to get to work, and to visit relatives and friends; each accounted for about a fifth of the total number of journeys reported. Journeys to school, to go shopping, and in the course of business were the next most important categories.

Means of Transport Used for Various Purposes

17. The analysis is not yet complete, but some general conclusions may already be drawn.

18. Except in the Kirkcudbrightshire area, about one-tenth of all school journeys were by public transport. Contract buses were used for half or more of school journeys, except in the Kirkcudbrightshire area. In that area, as half the school children were able to travel by public bus services, the need for contract buses was reduced and they were only used for a quarter of the school journeys.

19. People relied most on public transport for making shopping journeys. The proportion was nearly as high as a third in one area and over a fifth in two other areas.

20. The use of public transport for journeys to work varied considerably between areas, ranging from under 5 per cent. to over 25 per cent., but travel in the course of business was almost completely undertaken by private motor transport.

21. The proportion of journeys to visit relatives and friends using public transport was around 10 per cent., but public transport played a significant role in only one other type of journey, that for medical and dental treatment.

Effect of Lack of Public Transport (Table 7)

22. People were asked if they were hindered by local transport difficulties from carrying out particular activities and visiting particular places. There were quite significant variations between areas in the numbers reporting difficulties, but overall between about half and three-quarters of persons in households without private transport said they were hindered in some way. The proportion of persons in households with private transport reporting difficulties was much lower but still substantial, commonly about a fifth.

23. The number reporting lack of public transport as an obstacle to obtaining suitable employment was very small. In this respect, inhabitants have largely adapted themselves to the public transport available. The surveys could not measure how far such difficulties have been a contributory cause of people leaving the areas.

24. Between a quarter and over a half of persons in households without private transport said they had difficulty in travelling to obtain medical or dental treatment. Persons in households with private transport were not free from this difficulty either, though the proportion was about half as much. Other types of journeys for which many people reported difficulties were shopping journeys, journeys to visit relatives and friends, and to see persons in hospital.

Information Supplied by the British Railways Board, Bus Operators, Local and Other Authorities

25. The purpose of collecting this information was to find out what travel facilities were available, to supplement the facts gained from the house-to-house interview results.

Rail

26. As stated in paragraph 6, the Devon area was the only one with a railway in or adjacent to it. This served both sub-divisions of the area—Crediton West and North Tawton.

27. In the Crediton West area the number of passengers by public transport during the survey week was fairly evenly divided between bus and train, whilst more people boarded trains at North Tawton station than boarded buses in that area. The average number of persons per train was, however, low. The majority of rail journeys were made at sub-standard fares (62 per cent. on excursion tickets, 16 per cent. at normal fares, 12 per cent. on season tickets, 6 per cent. on free passes, and 4 per cent. railwaymen's privilege tickets).

Bus

28. All areas had bus services to a varying degree as described in paragraph 6. The average number of persons carried per bus in all areas during the survey week was low. A few journeys were obviously popular and carried more passengers, but these were the exception.

School Bus

29. Contract buses were the main means by which children got to school (see also paragraph 18). The contracts were usually placed for the carriage of a given number of pupils. The result was that there were rarely any vacant

seats. In Montgomeryshire, for example, it was stated that of 48 buses used in the County only one was never full.

Mail Vans

30. The General Post Office provided information giving a full picture of the pattern of activity of mail vans in the survey areas. The main characteristics were routes which were circuitous in the extreme, and timings which were ill-related to patterns of passenger transport need. In some cases there were timings which might *prima facie* be suitable for a journey in one direction, but no return trips. For example, in Devon there was a journey to Crediton from Zeal Monachorum at 6.15 p.m. and two from Morchard Road at 6.30 p.m. But there was no useful return.

Sitting Case Car Service: Ambulance Service

31. Journeys by these services were of two kinds, emergency runs and routine transport to medical appointments. The first were essentially unscheduled. The second were arranged by the operating authorities so that the maximum number of patients could be carried on any one trip. For example, in Montgomeryshire, the Sitting Case Car Service in 1962 carried 3,773 patients on a total of 749 journeys which represents 5-6 patients per journey.

Voluntary Car Services

32. A number of organisations, including the British Red Cross, the W.V.S., the Women's Institute, Old People's Welfare Committees, etc., were able to provide lifts in appropriate cases, but the scale of this contribution to motor transport in the survey areas appeared small. There was little pattern about such services. They were inevitably somewhat makeshift. Their existence depended upon the benevolent exercise of individual initiative.

APPENDIX

Boundaries of Survey Areas

1. *Devon—West of Crediton*

(a) *Bow, Clannaborough, Down St. Mary and Zeal Monachorum*

The boundary followed the line of the Barnstaple-Exeter railway from its intersection with the River Yeo as far as Copplestone. It followed the parish boundaries west for about one mile and then in a southerly direction as far as the Spreyton-Yeoford road which it followed west for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. After running north and then one mile west along the Bow-Spreyton boundary it joined the Bow, Zeal Monachorum and North Tawton boundaries north and west to the Bondleigh-Zeal road. After a loop to the west it took the North Tawton-Lapford road to Blackditch Cross, and ran along B.3220 to the Exeter-Barnstaple railway.

(b) *North Tawton*

The complete parish of N. Tawton.

2. *Montgomery—West of Welshpool*

The boundary followed the B.4395 from Llangadfan to the junction with B.4382, and then ran south to Dolanog and along the River Vyrnwy to New Bridge, south and west following the River Banwy neu Einion to a point two miles from Llanfair Caerenion, and continued north-west to the junction of A.495 with B.4382 when it followed A.495 and A.458 to Llangadfan.

3. *Lincoln—North of Horncastle*

From Bluestone Heath Road the boundary followed the parish boundary from about one mile south-east of Scamblesby to the junction of the Roman Road with A.153. It followed the Roman Road and High Street to a point a quarter of a mile short of the disused railway line where it ran along a minor road, passing just north of Donington-on-Bain to Bluestone Heath Road.

4. *Westmorland—North of Kirkby Stephen*

The area comprised the complete parishes of Murton, Warcop and Musgrave. The boundary was not for the most part marked by recognisable topographical features. It ran roughly south from a quarter of a mile east of Brampton, passing east of Appleby to the point where the railway crossed Helm Beck. It ran east, passing just south of Great Musgrave and north through Hillbeck Wood to Maize Beck and then via Maize Beck to High Cup Gill towards Brampton.

5. *Kirkcudbright—West of Dumfries*

The area included the village of Corsock and the boundary followed A.712 to the junction with B.794 and then south-south-east along B.794 and Urr Water to the intersection of the electricity transmission line with A.710. The boundary followed this line north-north-east and then north-east to the drive to Crochmore Farm, and then west along the Milton-Crocketford Road. It excluded the village of Crocketford, followed the A.75 south-west for several

hundred yards and ran along the minor road from A.75 via Black Park to A.712 at Black Park Lodge. The line was completed along A.712 to Corsock.

6. *Banffshire—Tomintoul*

The boundary of this area followed a straight line from the River Avon at the Haugh of Kilnmaichlie to the Hill of Knocknashalg. It then followed the parish boundary running south past Tamachlowen and Croftglass and the line of the Ladder Hills to A.939. After going along A.939 to Findron, it followed the minor roads passing by the south of Tomintoul to the River Avon.

TABLE 1
PRIVATE VEHICLE OWNERSHIP

<i>Survey Area</i>	<i>Percentage of total number of households interviewed</i>			
	<i>With any form of private transport</i>	<i>With cars</i>	<i>With commercial vehicles only*</i>	<i>With 2 or 3 wheeled vehicles only</i>
Devon	56	44	8	4
Montgomeryshire	73	47	25	1
Lincolnshire	56	43	6	7
Westmorland	58	46	9	3
Kirkcudbrightshire	59	48	5	6
Banffshire	56	48	6	3

* Excluding heavy vehicles and tractors.

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONS WITH VALID DRIVING LICENCES*

<i>Survey Area</i>	<i>Percentage of total persons interviewed having driving licences</i>	<i>Percentage of total households having at least one licence-holder</i>	<i>Percentage of all households with private transport having two or more licence-holders</i>	<i>Percentage of all households without private transport having one or more licence-holders</i>
Devon	31	62	37	21
Montgomeryshire	39	77	44	21
Lincolnshire	27	58	29	15
Westmorland	36	68	40	29
Kirkcudbrightshire	32	64	38	24
Banffshire	31	63	41	23

* Group A licences—excluding provisional licences.

TABLE 3
JOURNEYS MADE IN SURVEY WEEK*

<i>Survey Area</i>	<i>All persons interviewed</i>		<i>Persons in households with private transport</i>	<i>Persons in households without private transport</i>
	<i>Average number of journeys made in survey week</i>	<i>Percentage who made no journeys in survey week</i>	<i>Percentage who made no journeys in survey week</i>	<i>Percentage who made no journeys in survey week</i>
Devon	5.5	35	25	52
Montgomeryshire	6.8	22	20	31
Lincolnshire	6.7	24	15	39
Westmorland	6.8	22	17	32
Kirkcudbrightshire	6.9	25	19	37
Banffshire	5.7	33	25	48

* Including homeward journeys.

TABLE 4

MEANS OF TRANSPORT USED FOR JOURNEYS

Percentage of total journeys made by persons resident in the survey area by each means of transport†*

Survey Area	Public Transport			Contract bus		Private Motorised Transport				Other Means of Transport			
	Bus	Train	Total			Car	Commercial vehicle	2/3 wheeled vehicle	Total	Bicycle	Walking	Taxi/Hire Car	Other
Devon	6	5	11	14	14	47	13	5	65	6	7	2	-
Montgomeryshire ..	4	†	5	17	17	38	26	1	66	5	10	2	-
Lincolnshire	10	†	10	14	14	49	9	7	65	9	4	2	1
Westmorland	12	†	12	8	8	48	15	3	67	7	6	1	1
Kirkcubrightshire ..	25	†	25	6	6	46	11	3	60	7	3	2	-
Bedfordshire	4	†	4	10	10	52	13	1	66	9	16	1	1

* Excluding homeward journeys.

† Where more than one means of transport was used both were recorded. The figures therefore add to more than 100 in most cases.

‡ Less than 1 per cent. in each case.

TABLE 5

THE USE OF DIFFERENT MEANS OF TRANSPORT
DURING THE WEEK COMPARED WITH WEEKEND

Percentage of total journeys made by each means of transport†*

Survey Area	Public Transport		Contract Bus		Private Car		Commercial vehicle		2/3 wheeled vehicle		Other means‡	
	Mon.-Fri.	Sat.-Sun.	Mon.-Fri.	Sat.-Sun.	Mon.-Fri.	Sat.-Sun.	Mon.-Fri.	Sat.-Sun.	Mon.-Fri.	Sat.-Sun.	Mon.-Fri.	Sat.-Sun.
Devon.. ..	12	8	19	1	40	64	13	13	5	4	16	13
Montgomeryshire ..	5	3	22	1	35	47	25	31	1	1	17	20
Lincolnshire ..	9	13	20	1	43	63	9	9	7	6	17	10
Westmorland ..	11	14	11	1	43	61	16	14	4	2	17	9
Kirkcudbrightshire ..	27	19	8	1	41	60	11	11	3	2	13	9
Bedfordshire ..	2	8	15	1	46	64	15	10	1	1	31	21

* Excluding homeward journeys.

† Where more than one means of transport was used, both were recorded. The figures therefore add to more than 100 in each case.

‡ Walking, cycling, taxi, hire car, etc.

TABLE 6

PURPOSE OF JOURNEYS

Percentage of total number of journeys recorded in survey week in each purpose category*

<i>Survey Area</i>	<i>To work</i>	<i>To school</i>	<i>In course of business/employment</i>	<i>To do shopping</i>	<i>For medical/dental treatment</i>	<i>To visit relatives/friends</i>	<i>For sport/entertainment etc.</i>	<i>To lectures/ evening classes, etc.</i>	<i>Others</i>
Devon	24	17	9	14	2	20	6	4	5
Montgomeryshire ..	15	17	16	13	3	16	9	5	6
Lincolnshire	22	17	9	15	2	20	10	2	2
Westmorland	18	15	17	13	2	19	8	4	3
Kirkcudbrightshire ..	29	15	8	13	2	17	10	4	2
Banffshire	20	16	8	10	1	23	11	5	7

* Excluding houseward journeys.

TABLE 7

PERSONS WHO HAD DIFFICULTY IN MAKING JOURNEYS DUE TO INADEQUATE PUBLIC TRANSPORT FACILITIES

Percentage of total persons interviewed

Survey Area	All persons recording any difficulty		Purpose of journey* for which difficulty was experienced†										To reach more suitable employment	
			For medical/ dental treatment		To visit relatives and friends		For shopping		To visit persons in hospital					
			(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)		
Devon... ..	24	49	14	23	11	25	12	18	8	16	6	9		
Montgomeryshire ..	19	61	11	39	8	25	10	32	7	22	2	6		
Lincolnshire ..	36	76	24	54	17	52	21	48	9	25	5	6		
Westmorland ..	22	54	13	32	11	32	12	24	10	23	2	3		
Kirkcudbrightshire ..	22	49	10	23	9	30	8	18	9	28	2	3		
Banffshire ..	53	77	34	53	29	56	34	55	34	56	3	8		

* The categories listed do not cover all journeys for which difficulties were recorded.

† Where people expressed difficulty in making journeys for more than one purpose, each was recorded. The totals for the different purposes may therefore add to more than the figures shown in first column.

(a) Persons in households with private transport.

(b) Persons in households without private transport.